

ST. THOMAS ANGLICAN CHURCH, STITTSVILLE
PARISH MEETING NOTES
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2017, 7:00 P.M.

54 parishioners in attendance

The meeting was opened by Rev. Jane with welcoming remarks and prayer by Shirley Chennette.

Rev. Jane provided some history to the issue of whether to have one service on a Sunday morning or two:

- The arises almost every year when numbers at services drop in the summer
- Jane's philosophy has been in favour of keeping both services running because, in discussion with consultants and others in the diocese, "closing" one service sends a signal that the parish is "dying".
- This fall, however, emails were sent to corporation by parishioners and there was wide spread talk of it in the parish, so it was decided to take the issue to the congregation. A paper survey was taken and this meeting arranged.

Jane reviewed the survey results (please see attached both sides). Jane noted that a prevailing theme in the comments was the care and concern for one another.

William provided history of why we have two services: in the 1980's the church was full, which led to the new building being built and two services created to accommodate the Sunday School and growing numbers

Following is a summary of thoughts/ideas/feelings discussed regarding switching from two services to one:

- Getting to know each other, members of the other service, often do not know each other
- Choice: having the two services provides choice to people
- Impact on the service: going to one service will change how God's Garden is run; lessen need for volunteers (sides people, readers etc); etc
- Suggest change to one service on a trial basis; 9:30 start is a compromise
- Change to one service will result in people leaving the church; people leave for many reasons
- Difference in liturgy styles; the two services give people choice to go to the style that suits their needs
- Changing minds: through the conversation tonight, opinions are changing from when they filled out the survey
- Why are our numbers low? Across the Diocese the same trend is happening
- Communication needs improvements
- Survey: the survey was just that, not a vote on a final decision; it opened up the conversation and gave a starting point for the discussion

This led to a discussion more focussed on attracting others to the church:

- We would not have this meeting if pews were full
- Stittsville is growing, why aren't we?
- Need to be more welcoming, to all communities and peoples
- Changing societal trends, therefore we need to change our thinking (eg. parents working on the weekends)
- Communication: use social media more
- Some on the parish list rarely attend – find out why
- The Attracting Others group from the Visioning process last year will be presenting its preliminary report next month to address some of these points

SUMMARY:

It was noted that hearts, minds and opinions were changing through discussion tonight. There is a desire to bring the congregation together as one and to avoid an "us vs. them" mentality. There are strong feelings regarding styles of worship and having a choice. **We need more time to discuss this and other issues, pray about it and get together again before making a decision. It was proposed that we meet again in about four months, either just before vestry or at vestry in February to discuss again.**

Jane ended the meeting with prayer and thanks to all who attended. A positive, encouraging discussion!!

Notes by Shirley Chennette, People's Warden